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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [EZ](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL MURTHA VISIT TO CZECH REPUBLIC

Classified By: Ambassador Richard Graber, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Representative John Murtha's November 25 trip to the Czech Republic focused on missile defense (MD). DFM Tomas Pojar outlined the reasons the Czech government favors MD and prospects for ratification in the Czech parliament. Murtha discussed alternatives to interceptors in Poland; Pojar said the Czech government considers Poland-based interceptors an important part of the agreement; alternative arrangements would have to be explained to the Czech public. End Summary.

DFM Pojar

¶2. (U) Representative Murtha thanked DFM Pojar for Czech contributions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo, and asked for Pojar's assessment of missile defense (MD).

¶3. (C) Pojar said the Czech government favors MD for three reasons. First, from a historical perspective, because the U.S. &saved8 the Czechs three times, the Czechs should not say no to the U.S. on MD. Second, the Czech Republic is apprehensive about the Middle East with regard to terrorism and WMD; the future in the region is difficult to predict. Third, geopolitically, having U.S. strategic assets in the Czech Republic is beneficial for Central Europe as a way to counterbalance Russian dominance and reaffirm the region's NATO orientation.

¶4. (C) Representative Murtha asked whether it would make a difference to the Czechs if the proposed radar site in the Czech Republic were retained, but with an alternative location for interceptors instead of ground based interceptors (GBIs) in Poland.

¶5. (C) Pojar said the Czechs would need to be able to show that any alternative interceptor arrangement would cover the Czech Republic, and be able to explain to the public how a Czech radar site would fit into an alternative interceptor arrangement. Pojar noted that radar in the Czech Republic would also be useful for any MD architecture and for NATO airspace protection.

¶6. (C) Representative Murtha asked about prospects for ratification of MD legislation in the Czech parliament. Pojar said he expects the agreements to be ratified, but that ratification will not be easy. Much depends, Pojar said, on what the incoming administration does on MD. According to Pojar, the Czech &nightmare scenario8 is a Czech parliamentary approval of the legislation, followed by a U.S. decision not to pursue MD. This would not just be an issue for the &political elite8; it would negatively affect bilateral relations for years to come.

¶7. (C) Murtha assured Pojar that the Czech Republic is part

of U.S. national security and that a radar site in the Czech Republic makes sense. On missiles, he said, there is still a question whether land-based or sea-based interceptors are preferable. Pojar again stressed that the Czech government would need to be assured that any alternative arrangement would cover Czech territory.

¶18. (C) Murtha asked whether the Czechs prefer GBIs in Poland over other interceptor arrangements. Pojar said the Czech government considers Poland-based interceptors an important part of the agreement; another arrangement would prolong the debate in the Czech Republic. In addition, regionally, Poland is a &critical Central European country for the transatlantic alliance.

¶19. (C) Pojar briefed Representative Murtha on Russian intelligence activities inside the Czech Republic and problems with Russian oil supplies since the Czech Republic signed the Bilateral Missile Defense Agreement (BMDA) in July. Fortunately, Pojar added, the Czech Republic could be somewhat protected from interruptions in Russian gas supplies because of its status as a transit country to Germany.

Ministry of Defense Meeting

¶10. (C) Representative Murtha met with Czech MOD's Deputy Director of Strategy and Policy Radomir Jahoda on missile defense and Afghanistan. On missile defense, Murtha said that he supports building the radar, but is more skeptical about the interceptors in Poland. He felt it might be better to use Aegis ships or other sea-based options. Murtha was also very appreciative of the Czech contributions in Afghanistan and wished that other NATO allies would also have troops doing &hard jobs in hard places." Murtha was impressed with the Czechs' ability to get experts to their PRT in Logar, especially the Czechs use of hydrologists that understand the area,s ancient aquifer system.

¶11. (U) Representative Murtha did not have an opportunity to clear this cable before departing post.
Graber